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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

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Subject: Title

[THE SOVIET NOTES ON GERMAN UNITY AS A POSSIBLE INDICATION OF
A MORE "CONCILIATORY" SOVIET POLICY]

1. Recent Soviet moves have been interpreted in some quarters as indicating that the Kremlin is seeking to produce a calmer international atmosphere.

2. The recent Soviet notes on German unity are the most striking indication of such a possible shift in Soviet policy. In the first of these notes, the Kremlin called for a peace treaty with a united, neutralized, and rearmed Germany. In the second note, the Kremlin asked for immediate four-power discussion of the terms upon which free all-German elections should take place. If the Kremlin is actually prepared to permit free elections in East Germany, and to permit German unification and rearmament, these concessions would represent a significant shift in Soviet policy toward Germany, and might indicate a shift in the world policy of the Kremlin.

3. While such a shift is possible, the Board of National Estimates believes that the Soviet objective is to divide the West and retard Western rearmament, and that there are as yet no indications that the Kremlin intends to make real concessions in order to attain these objectives or in order to lessen international tension.

4. The Kremlin probably estimates that if the Western Powers agree to four-power discussions on all-German elections, the conclusion of the EDC and contractual agreements would be delayed, and that delay would not only prevent ratification of the agreements

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by the US Congress before it adjourns, but would also adversely affect congressional sentiment with regard to the larger program of military aid to the NATO countries. The Kremlin probably also estimates that European opinion is in such delicate balance that a few months' delay might be fatal to the rearmament program. Therefore, if the Kremlin could delay the conclusion of the EDC and contractual agreements the whole Western defense program might be delayed, or crippled. On the other hand, the Kremlin probably estimates that if the Western Powers refuse to discuss terms for all-German elections, public sentiment in West Germany, Britain, and France might turn so strongly against the EDC and contractual agreements that the governments of these countries would refuse to sign the agreements, or that the agreements would not be ratified.

5. The Soviet proposals for German unity come, therefore, at the time when they can do the most harm. Moreover, the proposals commit the USSR to nothing more than talk, and the Kremlin has never been averse to protracted discussion.

6. We believe, therefore, that the estimate in NIE-53, "Probable Soviet Courses of Action with Respect to Germany during 1952," (19 February 1952), remains firm:

"In order to delay West German integration with the West and West German rearmament, the Kremlin might attempt negotiations on free elections throughout Germany, but only to gain time. The Kremlin almost certainly believes that free elections would result in a repudiation of Communism in East Germany. Moreover, the Kremlin would not be satisfied that a united Germany which was not under Soviet control could be kept neutral, or that Germany, once free, would not eventually rearm and turn against the USSR. We believe, therefore, that the Kremlin is unlikely actually to permit free elections to take place, even if the Kremlin were convinced that by this means it could block West German integration with the West and West German rearmament. As a tactical manoeuvre, the Kremlin might remove some of its more overt control mechanisms, including some of its military forces. We do not believe, however, that the Kremlin would so relax its control over East Germany as to affect the foundations of Soviet authority."

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